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ABSTRACT

This position paper discusses: (1) the definition, rationale, and goals for social studies in the early childhood and elementary years; (2) developmental characteristics that should be considered in the planning of a social studies program; (3) basic research on elementary social studies; (4) the status of social studies in the elementary school; and (5) preservice and inservice education for teachers of early childhood and elementary social studies. The paper also addresses such topics as the nature of problems encountered by young children as they enter school and the length of time social studies should be taught daily in the elementary school. A total of 58 references are cited. (RH)

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Social Studies for Early Childhood and Elementary School Children Preparing for the 21st Century

A Report from NCSS Task Force on
Early Childhood/Elementary
Social Studies*

Approved by NCSS Board of Directors, June 1988

This position paper will discuss the definition, rationale, and goals for social studies in the early childhood/elementary years; the developmental characteristics that should be considered in planning a social studies program; an overview of the basic research for elementary social studies; a look at the current status of social studies in the elementary school; and a discussion of preservice and in-service education for teachers of early childhood/elementary social studies.

Society is characterized by increasingly rapid social and technological change. Society's ability to orchestrate change frequently outstrips its ability to reflect on the ramifications of what it has done. Are children developing skills to absorb new information in light of the information explosion? Are they learning structures for understanding and adapting to changes in technology, the marketplace, and their own family organization? Are they beginning to learn about interdependence and the relationship of technology to social conditions?

When they leave the classroom, many children do not return immediately to the family setting but go to a day-care facility where they again interact with others from a variety of backgrounds. Nearly all the children spend more hours each week watching television than they spend in any other activity besides sleeping. As they sit passively watching, they are bombarded by messages. They take in spotty, disconnected information about war, the homeless, Ethiopia, the president, the Soviets. Are they learning any structures for interpreting this information and fitting it into a larger framework? Commercial television networks see children as an economic force and press them to make consumer decisions. Are children learning to evaluate these messages, or do they continue to sit passively as they are manipulated?

The social studies in the early childhood/elementary years are crucial if we expect the young people of this nation to become active, responsible citizens for maintaining the democratic values upon which this nation was established. Unless children acquire the foundations of knowledge, attitudes, and skills in social studies in the important elementary years, it is unlikely that teachers in the junior and senior high schools will be successful in preparing effective citizens for the 21st century.

I. What problems do young children encounter as they enter school?

Consider a kindergarten class in any one of thousands of school systems in the United States. How do the children in the class experience the world? Their classroom mirrors the larger society with its diverse ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Are the children learning structures for accepting and appreciating diversity at this critical age in the development of lifelong attitudes? Mere contact with diversity, without understanding, can intensify conflict. Does their classroom mirror the larger society in this sense also?

In classroom, day-care center, home, and neighborhood, kindergartners encounter rules and laws. Do they understand the reasons for these institutions? Can they distinguish between legitimate authority and raw power? Are they learning to act as rule makers as well as rule obeyers and to see the necessity of personal involvement in the democratic process?

The kindergarten class of 1988 will graduate in the year 2001 as citizens who live in a world characterized by a staggering volume of information, varying sets of values, and a growing interdependence among nations. However, children will not automatically become citizens when they graduate or reach voting age; they are citizens now, with rights, responsibilities, and a confusing array of choices before them. The abilities for making personally and socially productive decisions do not just happen. They require that the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of social studies be introduced early and built upon throughout the school years.

II. What should be the definition of and rationale for social studies for early childhood/elementary children?

The social studies are the study of political, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects of societies in the past, present, and future. For elementary school children, as well as for all age groups social studies have several purposes. The social studies equip them with the knowledge and understanding of the past necessary for coping with the present and planning for the future, enable them to understand and participate effectively in their world, and explain their relationship to other people and to social, economic, and political institutions. Social studies can provide students with the skills for productive problem solving and decision making, as well as for assessing issues and making thoughtful value judgments. Above all, the social studies

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help students to integrate these skills and understandings into a framework for responsible citizen participation, whether in their play group, the school, the community, or the world.

The energy, curiosity, and imagination of young children lead them to action and interaction within their environment from a narrow, unilateral perspective. They live in a family, play in a peer group, and make decisions about how they will relate to other people, what to do in their free time, with whom to play, what books to read, and how to spend money. The larger social world penetrates their lives through television and other media, travel, family, and friends; but young children lack the conceptual base to integrate the new knowledge these experiences bring. They also lack the skills to account for other perspectives in solving problems or to anticipate long-range consequences when making decisions.

A planned K–12 social studies program directs and focuses these natural characteristics to help children understand and function in their personal and social worlds. These learnings must be developed systematically from an early age, so that children move from egocentric, random observations and experiences to a broader and more structured conceptual organization. Many times, teachers suggest that at the primary level everything they do is related to social studies, but it is important to recognize that an effective social studies program cannot be just a haphazard collection of unrelated activities. It must be organized systematically around concepts from history and the social sciences.

Active, curious children need, want, and are able to learn skills that are taught and reinforced in social studies classes. These skills are required for processing information so that they can make generalizations and integrate new information into a developing system of knowledge.

Children formulate many of their attitudes and values toward society in the early years. The development of these attitudes and values occurs primarily outside the school setting. However, the social studies program should provide a setting for children to acquire knowledge of history and the social sciences and to be exposed to a broad variety of opinions, facilitating the formulation, reassessment, and affirmation of their beliefs.

The social studies program enables children to participate effectively now in the groups to which they belong and not to look only to their future participation as adults. The school itself serves as a laboratory for students to learn social participation directly and not symbolically. Democratic and participatory school and classroom environments are essential to this type of real-world learning.

If the social studies are not part of the elementary curriculum, we cannot expect our children to be prepared to understand or participate effectively in an increasingly complex world. They need to encounter and *re*encounter, in a variety of contexts, the knowledge, concepts, skills, and attitudes that form the foundation for participation in a democratic society. Otherwise, we are in danger of disrupting the critical balance between individual and community needs. Social studies are intended to help children understand, evaluate, and make decisions regarding these often competing claims. The problem lies in developing a learning environment and pedagogy that are intellectually and developmentally appropriate.

III. What are the goals for early childhood/elementary social studies that no other subject in the elementary curriculum can achieve?

It is understood that teaching social studies in the elementary schools is an essential part of the framework of an overall K–12 social studies program. The elementary school years are important in that they are the ones in which children develop a foundation for the entire social studies program and a beginning sense of efficacy as participating citizens of their world.

Basic skills of reading, writing, and computing are necessary but not sufficient to participate or even survive in a world demanding independent and cooperative problem solving to address complex social, economic, ethical, and personal concerns. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for informed and thoughtful participation in society require a systematically developed program focusing on concepts from history and the social sciences.

Knowledge. Social studies provide a sense of history, a sense of existence in the past as well as the present, a feeling of being in history. Even though young children find the concept of time difficult, they need to understand how the present has come about and to develop an appreciation for the heritage of this country. Huck and Kuhn (1968) state that even though children have difficulty with time concepts, they can develop an appreciation for their historical heritage through factual presentation of history, biographies of famous people, and historical fiction.

Geographic concepts are equally difficult, but the social studies provide continuing opportunities for children to understand the spatial relationships of their immediate environment as well as those of areas of the world. Scholars found that children need systematic instruction to develop map and globe skills (Rice and Cobb 1978; Crabtree 1968, 1974; Savage and Bacon 1969; Cox 1977). Children need to develop an understanding of and an appreciation for their physical and cultural environments and to consider how resources will be allocated in the future.

Concepts from anthropology and sociology provide knowledge and understanding of how the multiplicity of cultures within society and the world has developed. Children need to recognize the contributions of each culture and to explore its value system. Acquisition of concepts about racial and ethnic groups is complex, but early, planned, and structured activities can result in positive attitudes in children (Katz 1976, 234).

Knowledge from sociology, economics, and political science allows children to understand the institutions within the society and to learn about their roles within groups. Although children easily learn concepts from economics such as work, exchange, production, and consumption, they need useful and powerful economic knowledge and the formal development of critical-thinking skills. Economic content in the early years should relate to events in children's lives as they examine buying, selling, and trading transactions, the process of making goods and services, and the origin of materials and products in their everyday lives (Armento 1986).

Skills. The skills that are primary to social studies are those related to maps and globes, such as understanding and using locational and directional terms. However, other skills that enhance students' abilities to learn, to make decisions, and to develop as competent, self-directed citizens are more meaningful and useful when developed within the context of social studies. Skills that are shared with other parts of the curriculum but may be most powerfully taught through social studies include communication skills such as writing and speaking; research skills such as collecting, organizing, and interpreting data; thinking skills such as hypothesizing, comparing, drawing inferences; decision-making skills such as considering alternatives and consequences; interpersonal skills such as seeing others' points of view, accepting responsibility, and dealing with conflict; and reading skills such as reading pictures, books, maps, charts, and graphs.

For children to develop citizenship skills appropriate to democracy, they must be capable of thinking critically

about complex societal problems and global problems. Teachers must arrange the classroom environment to promote data gathering, discussion, and critical reasoning by students. Another important aspect of citizenship is that of decision maker. Children must acquire the skills of decision making, but also study the process that occurs as groups make decisions. Continually accelerating technology has created and will continue to create rapid changes in society. Children need to be equipped with the skills to cope with change.

Attitudes. The early years are ideal for children to begin to understand democratic norms and values (justice, equality, etc.) – especially in terms of the smaller social entities of the family, classroom, and community. Applying these concepts to the nation and the world is easier if one understands and appreciates them on smaller but manageable scales.

Although not uniquely in social studies, children can achieve a positive self-concept within the context of understanding the similarities and differences of people. Children need to understand that they are unique in themselves but share many similar feelings and concerns with other children. They need to understand how as individuals they can contribute to society.

Children can also develop, within the context of social studies, positive attitudes toward knowledge and learning and develop a spirit of inquiry that will enhance their understanding of their world so that they will become rational, humane, participating, effective members of a democratic society.

IV. What are the developmental characteristics of children that should be considered in planning a social studies program?

First, we need to consider that children of all ages come to school from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. They come with different value systems, experiences, and learning styles, and with different feelings about themselves and the people around them. As we discuss the general characteristics of children, we recognize these individual differences.

A report from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) provides a helpful summary of the significant literature on the development characteristics of children.

Most five-year-olds can begin to combine simple ideas into more complex relations. They have a growing memory capacity and fine motor physical skills. They have a growing interest in the functional aspects of written language, uch as recognizing meaningful words nd trying to write their names (NAEYC 1986). They need an environment rich in printed materials that stimulates the development of language and literacy skills in a meaningful context. They also need a variety of direct experiences to develop cognitively, physically, emotionally, and socially. Since five-year-olds come to school with an interest in the community and the world outside their own, curriculum can expand beyond the child's immediate experience of self, home, and family (NAEYC 1986).

Six-year-olds are active learners and demonstrate considerable verbal ability. They are interested in games and rules and develop concepts and problem-solving skills from these experiences. Hands-on activity and experimentation are necessary for this age group (NAEYC 1986). Seven-year-olds become increasingly able to reason, listen to others, and show social give-and-take. Spatial relationships and time concepts are difficult for them to perceive. Flexibility, open-mindedness, and tolerance of unfamiliar ideas essential in social studies are formed to a remarkable extent by the interactions of the four- to eight-year-olds (Joyce 1970). Eight-year-olds combine great curiosity with increased social interest. They are able to learn about people who live elsewhere in the world. During these early grades, children can learn from the symbolic experiences of reading books and listening to stories; however, their understanding of what they read is based on their ability to relate the written word to their own experience (NAEYC 1986).

Research indicates that by age nine or ten children have well-established racial and ethnic prejudices and these are highly resistant to change (Joyce 1970); therefore, teachers must go beyond studies of other cultures and celebrations of their holidays and include studies of families, music, shelter, customs, beliefs, and other aspects common to all cultures (NAEYC 1986).

Nine-year-olds may be somewhat self-conscious and prefer group activities to working alone. They are beginning to understand abstractions as well as cause-and-effect relationships. Most are operating at a concrete level but need real experiences of society and social institutions such as those provided in social studies. Ten-year-olds may be experiencing bodily changes and rapid growth spurts. These changes cause periods of frustration and anger. Generally, ten-year-olds are interested in and enthusiastic about places and problems in the news. They want to know what events caused these problems, where they occurred, and the reasons for them. Most of the skills for learning social studies have been introduced by this time and they are able to apply them to new situations.

Eleven-year-olds are generally in a period of transition between childhood and adolescence. More decision making is required of them. They tend to be sociable and need opportunities to express feelings and opinions. The developmental research suggests that children at this age do not have the ability to view issues from the perspective of a whole society (Selman 1975), but need to be confronted with the types of analytical questions about history, society, and social and political behavior so important in social studies learning. Political attitudes develop very early and undergo major changes during the elementary school years. Attitudes developed by the end of elementary school are away from a personalized, benevolent government toward a more abstract, realistic idea (Greenstein 1969). The social studies also inform attitudes with accurate information from the humanities and the social sciences.

As we consider these characteristics, it becomes obvious that social studies must be an essential part of the elementary curriculum to provide the essential elements for continuing the democratic way of life. There may not be a more urgent need in the elementary school.

V. What is the research base for elementary school social studies?

What guidance does research offer in the selection of content and learning experiences for social studies to enable children to achieve the goals previously described – especially for children who will be citizens of the 21st century? Frequently, curricular patterns are not grounded either in research or in an understanding of how children learn. In fact, the social studies are often left out of the curriculum at the primary level since some educators fail to see sufficient evidence to support their inclusion (Goodlad 1984; Clegg 1977). Yet we cannot dispute the importance of an educated citizenry in maintaining, preserving, and refining a democratic society, and research points out the critical nature of early and varied learning in elementary social studies (cf. Rice 1966; Hess and Torney 1967; Atwood 1986).

Social studies concepts, based as they are in human interactions, are complex. As a result of these complexities, some would suggest that young children not be introduced to the concepts until they are mature enough to understand them. After a decade of research on early learning in social studies, Rice (1966, 3) concluded that children could learn more difficult and abstract social studies concepts much

earlier than is expected in the traditional social studies curriculum. What is equally important, however, is not so much that children are capable of earlier and more complex learning, but that, if the early learning does not occur, the optimum teaching time for some concepts may pass, making it much more difficult for students to entertain new ideas or to think critically about old ones. There seem to be crucial years for certain concepts – times when students are most receptive or have developed a tolerance for or interest in emotionally powerful topics long before these topics are introduced in the curriculum. What, then, does research indicate about the process of learning particular social studies concepts?

Research findings related to the previously described goals – the development of concepts related to social studies content, the development of civic understanding, and the development of a social perspective that enables children to function at all levels of community to which they belong – highlight the significance of elementary social studies. This is not intended as an exhaustive review of the research but rather to emphasize certain studies. More comprehensive reviews can be found in William B. Stanley's *Review of Research in Social Studies Education: 1976–1983* (1985), Virginia A. Atwood's *Elementary School Social Studies: Research as a Guide to Practice* (1986), and Linda Rosenzweig's *Developmental Perspective on the Social Studies* (1983). Social studies also benefit from a wide range of research in other disciplines, notably those of psycho- and sociolinguistic studies considering linkages between language and conceptual development (cf. Nelms 1987), work in cooperative learning (cf. Slavin, in press; Slavin 1981), and research in social science disciplines that inform social studies.

Time and space. History and geography, keystones of elementary as well as secondary social studies, are linked to conceptions of time and space. Yet these concepts are difficult even for some adults. Some scholars have argued, in fact, that Western society makes it especially difficult to develop a sense of time as it relates to history because Western society does not provide clear and present needs for such concepts (Poster 1973). Others have noted the culture-boundedness of time conceptions, including Western, linear concepts of time. In any case, both time and space are abstract concepts formulated on relationships that are equally abstract and certainly provide difficulties for young children. This acknowledgment of the difficulty of acquiring sophisticated time and space concepts has led to some reluctance to introduce historical and geographical content in the elementary curriculum. Recent research indicates that this reluctance may be unfounded.

- Young children who are active participants in a highly structured and sequential series of geographic inquiries can learn complex analytic processes and concepts of geography (Crabtree 1974; GENIP Committee on K–6 Geography 1987; Muessig 1987).
- Evidence indicates that children do possess complex spatial information and can abstract information from map symbols (Hewes 1982; Hatcher 1983; Park and James 1983; Liben, Moore, and Golbeck 1982).
- Children can learn cardinal directions as early as kindergarten (Lanegran, Snowfield, and Laurent 1970).
- The type of discourse used in history teaching appears to influence student interest. Children who encountered historical data in the form of biography and historical fiction exhibited interest in and enthusiasm for history and for further investigation in more traditional sources (Levstik 1986).
- Historical and geographical understanding may not be linked to the developmental patterns associated with acquiring physical time concepts (Kennedy 1983).

Economic understanding. Armento (1986) indicates that "part of the role of social studies during elementary school years is to use children's informal learning as a basis for formal development of critical-thinking skills and for the construction of useful and powerful economic knowledge."

- By age seven, children have formulated fairly accurate conceptions of work, wants, and scarcity and evidence the capability of developing a method for making decisions (Armento 1986).
- Pictures and other concretizing tools can greatly benefit children with learning disabilities and those who have not enjoyed a broad variety of experience (Armento 1986).

Social perspective. The focus on relationships between people and their environments in elementary social studies is derived from the assumption that young children need to understand both their own uniqueness and their relationship to the world. Social knowledge is constructed as students attempt to build coherent systems for thinking about and explaining their immediate environment and the elements that make up the larger world environment (Turiel 1983). Their social judgments are not random responses; rather, they are the result of the application of analysis and reason in the social world and are influenced by such factors as peer groups, adults, social and educational environments, experiences, and the institutions to which they are exposed. Social judgments also involve more than the child's "getting along" in the home or school environment. They involve the child's ability to make decisions about such issues as race and ethnicity, citizen concerns of law and justice, and social welfare and economics, many of which make competing claims in a rapidly changing world. Research on how children acquire these understandings indicates that

- Children are more open to diversity in the early elementary years than in later years (Stone 1986). A 4th grader, for instance, is more likely to express interest in studying and visiting foreign countries than an 8th grader.
- Positive self-concepts, important in positively perceiving and judging social interactions, also form during these crucial early years (Stanley 1985, 77). Particular classroom environments seem to influence the ways children develop these interactions. Teachers who appear to enjoy teaching, who include great student-to-student interaction, shared decision making, and positive student-to-teacher interactions, foster more positive self-concepts in their pupils.
- Interest in and analysis of racial and ethnic differences begin early. Between the ages of six and nine, children begin to identify their own racial group as "better than the out-group" (Semaj 1980, 76).
- Acquisition of concepts about racial and ethnic groups is complex, but there is evidence that early, planned, and structured activities can result in improving positive attitudes in children (Katz 1976, 234).
- Elementary age children are already well aware of societal attitudes toward different groups (e.g., housing patterns, dating, and marriage mores). Research also indicates that elementary children can think critically about these patterns where they have sufficient experience and active involvement in discussion and inquiry (Ragan and McAulay 1973).

Civic Understanding. Research indicates that children are ready to deal with and already have ideas about civic understanding.

- As early as kindergarten, students engage in citizenship education, both covert and overt (Edwards 1986).
- Political feelings, evaluations, and attachments form well before the child learns the relevant supporting information (Greenstein 1969, 72).
- By 8th grade, children have already acquired basic orientations, and political socialization is generally well advanced by the end of elementary

school (Hess and Torney 1967, 220).

- By the 8th grade, children have developed a sense of the need for consensus and majority rule in the democratic process. They have not recognized the role of debate, disagreement, and conflict in the operation of a democratic political system (Hess and Torney 1967, 216).
- A developed sense of justice and law appears to be requisite to democratic citizenship (Kohlberg 1976, 213). Particular types of classroom environments, including discussions in which students must actively think and communicate about another's reasoning, appear to facilitate this type of growth (Berkowitz 1981; Berkowitz and Gibbs 1983).

Needed research. There is much that research has not told us about teaching and learning social studies. We lack a sufficient body of basic research in many fields including research on teaching methodologies most appropriate for teaching specific social studies concepts, skills, and attitudes. We need studies of the effects of particular approaches to organizing social studies content – for instance, thematic versus chronological. These studies must take into account how children learn, another problem in need of investigation. There is also a need for further research on social studies and the exceptional child, both in terms of the exceptional child as learner and in helping other children understand and interact with exceptional children. Little has been done to investigate appropriate content and methodology for preschool and kindergarten social studies, although Carolyn Edwards' book, *Promoting Social and Moral Development in Young Children* (1986), is a thought-provoking start in that direction.

One of the most important conclusions one can draw from the available research on early learning in social studies is the critical importance of the elementary years in laying the foundation for later and increasingly mature understanding. There is reason to believe that teachers who miss these crucial opportunities to build interest, to introduce concepts from history and the social sciences, and to develop social perspectives and civic understanding may make it more difficult for citizens of the 21st century to cope with their future.

VI. What is the current status of social studies in the elementary school?

In schools throughout the United States, there are exciting classrooms where teachers challenge students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for making reasoned social commitments and decisions; where students hold mock trials and legislative debates to gain experience with the judicial process and the rules of debate; where they write classroom constitutions and hold elections to understand the role of the citizen in shaping political decisions; where they debate such social issues as welfare and social programs to develop an awareness of those in need of such programs; where they graph rainfall and temperatures around the country and can interpret the geographical patterns that result; where they develop develop travel brochures to interest students from other countries to visit their country; where they use milk cartons to build a city and can explain why certain land uses develop in areas of the city; where they hold a global olympics day to build an interest in international knowledge; or where someone role-plays a historical figure and holds a press conference for furthering knowledge of the humanity and motivations of these important persons. The overall status of social studies in elementary schools still needs improvement. We find teachers who feel unqualified to teach the content of social studies or who misinterpret them, confining instruction to a narrow focus on socialization skills or mere recall of facts from history, geography, and civics. We find that the time available for teaching the basic tools and concepts of the social sciences that can contribute to understanding human behavior receives an ever-shrinking slice of the school day. At best, this can provide only superficial treatment of this important learning. Student apathy—and even dislike – for a subject considered to be lifeless and useless is understandable in classrooms where strategies encouraging active involvement in grappling with human issues are absent; where forced marches through textbooks are frequent; and where the assumption prevails that memorization of names, places, and dates will somehow translate itself during adulthood into civic involvement. This type of curriculum does not prepare students for a future characterized by rapid change, increasing diversity, and global interdependence.

Elementary school social studies, especially in the primary grades, continue to suffer a decline in emphasis (Goodlad 1984; Gross 1977; Hahn 1985). Average instructional time ranges from approximately 20 minutes per day at the primary level to 34 minutes in the upper elementary grades (Lengel and Superka 1982). Some schools report very little or no social studies instruction at all in grades K–3 (Atwood 1986). This low priority is coupled with the belief of many elementary teachers that, although they are well qualified to teach reading and mathematics, they are less prepared to teach social studies (Eslinger and Superka 1982). Students themselves often characterize social studies as difficult, uninteresting, and largely irrelevant to their present and future lives. This comes as no surprise in light of reports that the dominant classroom pattern is characterized by lecture and recitation, reading textbooks, and completing worksheets. Goodlad's 1984 study confirms earlier reports that, even when students express a high interest in social studies topics, classroom treatment tends to reduce these topics to recitation of dates and places and displaces opportunities to explore relationships, draw inferences about human behavior, and make in-depth cultural comparisons.

Goodlad found that at the primary level the social studies curriculum is blurred by lack of common agreement about what is to be taught. A predominant theme appears to be an effort to help students understand themselves and others in the context of family and community. These topics are punctuated by occasional – and often superficial – attention to other cultures.

At the upper elementary level, history, geography, and civics become solidly established in the curriculum. The major emphasis is on the United States with additional time allocated to world history and geography. However, pressure increases to memorize more and more low-level information (Atwood 1986). Although teachers list thinking and decision-making skills prominently among goals for students, actual practice reveals vastly different priorities. Essay tests are rare, and opportunities to engage in the problem-solving and inquiry activities that are key ingredients in citizen efficacy are notably absent from most classrooms. The prevailing inattention to international topics and in-depth cultural comparisons leaves little mystery as to why more than 50 percent of the students in Goodlad's study perceived other countries and their ideologies as threatening to the United States. He concludes that many elementary teachers have not identified the curricular components necessary for understanding the United States in a global context. Relying solely on reading textbooks, completing worksheets, taking tests, and listening eliminates the active, participatory power of social studies that is essential to the education of citizens in a democracy.

Newmann (1986) notes that a trend toward minimal civic participation among adults can be expected to continue. Most people's only foray into the public arena is voting or temporary

involvement in single-issue politics. Strikingly absent is a feeling of personal trusteeship of general civic welfare. The current agenda of most schools lack the components for converting into reality the stated goal of producing active, informed citizens. In a complex, interdependent world, students remain ethnocentric. In a participatory political culture, they receive scant opportunity to learn participation. In an era of rapidly expanding knowledge, they have few chances to develop the structures necessary for sifting and evaluating the vast amount of information constantly streaming at them through the media.

VII. How should we prepare teachers of early childhood and elementary social studies?

Effective early childhood/elementary social studies as described earlier in this paper will not just happen. If the status of early childhood/elementary social studies education is to change, then the education of teachers who have the responsibility for teaching those children will be a critical factor. Teacher education in social studies has the task of educating teachers with sufficient content knowledge in history and the social sciences; knowledge about and skill in different teaching techniques; an ability to locate, evaluate, and use appropriate resources to supplement the text; sufficient knowledge regarding the characteristics and abilities of young children; and an enthusiasm for teaching social studies that comes from an understanding of the importance of social studies in the early years and an appreciation for and understanding of social studies content.

NCSS has adopted Standards for the Preparation of Social Studies Teachers (1988) to address these goals. It leaves to the individual states and teacher-education institutions to design specific programs around these standards. The NCSS standards specify that "candidates for initial licensure as social studies teachers should have gained substantial understanding of the information, concepts, theories, analytical approaches and differing values perspectives, including global and multicultural perspectives, important to teaching social studies. Problem-solving, critical-thinking, and application skills should be stressed." The standards recognize, however, that teaching social studies to children requires more. The standards further state that "courses in social studies methods should prepare prospective teachers to select, integrate, and translate knowledge and methodology from history and social science disciplines in ways appropriate to students in the school level they will teach and give attention to the goals unique to the social studies and those shared jointly with other areas of the school curriculum. Students should also be able to teach social studies utilizing a variety of curriculum approaches and in different types of settings."

Early childhood and elementary school teachers must be well versed in learning and motivation theories. They need to understand cognitive and psychosocial development and its relationship to the teaching and learning processes. They need to be able to integrate concepts, processes, and examples from science, literature, mathematics, music, art, and social studies. They must understand the effects of sociopolitical and economic variables on families and, consequently, on children. It is critical for prospective teachers to observe and work with children in order for them to assimilate, synthesize, and substantiate all that is learned in a program.

The goals of social studies dictate that elementary school teachers have certain experiences, skills, values, and knowledge. Multicultural experiences for prospective elementary teachers are crucial. Studies have shown that the numbers of minority children in schools are growing while the numbers of minority teachers are declining; these phenomena affect elementary social studies in two ways. Teachers need to be well grounded in multicultural education so that they can teach about it, and they need to be sensitive to the needs of minority children. Jantz and Klawiller (1985, 82) state that attitudes about race crystallize during the later elementary years and "the attitudes expressed by teachers and peers are important in the elaboration of racial attitudes."

VIII. What type of continued professional development is needed for early childhood/elementary social studies teachers?

Teaching must be seen as continuous learning. Initial certification only commences the process. Continued professional development should be shaped and controlled by the continuously evolving research related to teaching methodologies, child development, learning principles, and new technological developments that may be used in instruction. Teachers must remain knowledgeable of changing demographic patterns of the nation and accompanying changes in student characteristics. New knowledge in history and the social sciences, current issues, controversial issues, and evolving social conditions requires the constant attention of the teachers.

Programs of individual professional growth may include such experiences as attendance and participation in conventions, in-service courses and workshops, travel and exchange programs, postgraduate studies, participation in professional organizations, reading of desirable professional literature, and self-evaluations (Dobkin, Fischer, Ludwig, and Kobliner 1985).

Professional development within the local school district should provide: (1) a well-organized teacher development and evaluation program; (2) support staff for instructional improvement; (3) appropriate social studies materials and resources; (4) a functioning social studies curriculum committee; (5) a K–12, systemwide, articulated social studies program that is regularly reviewed and updated; (6) opportunities for teachers to participate in professional social studies organizations at a local, state, and national level; and (7) a professional library that contains social studies periodicals, research studies, social studies texts, and related literature.

State and national professional organizations should be involved in the professional growth activities of teachers. Of the many contributions these professional organizations make, the publication of significant literature is one of the most important. These organizations should also act as a voice for improving education in general.

Professional growth programs will influence and control teachers' abilities throughout their professional careers. It is imperative that each individual make a personal commitment to professional growth and through that commitment provide effective and exciting social studies for early childhood/elementary children.

IX. Appropriate number of daily minutes for social studies teaching in the elementary school

Given the importance of social studies in the elementary school, NCSS recommends that 20% of the academic day which includes reading/language arts, science, mathematics, and the arts, be devoted to social studies instruction.

X. Summary

If the young people of this nation are to become effective participants in a democratic society, then social studies must be an essential part of the curriculum in the early childhood/elementary years. In a world that demands independent and cooperative problem solving to address complex social, economic, ethical, and personal concerns, the social studies are as basic for survival as reading, writing, and comput-

ing. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary for informed and thoughtful participation in society require a systematically developed program focused on concepts from history and the social sciences.

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